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UC Santa Barbara Physicist Shares 2006 Gruber Cosmology Prize

Philip M. Lubin, a professor of physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara, is one of a group of scientific pioneers involved with the Cosmic Background Explorer (COBE) who were recognized today with the 2006 Gruber Cosmology Prize for their team's groundbreaking studies confirming the "Big Bang" theory of how the universe was born.

Lubin is one of 19 members of the COBE team, formed by NASA in 1979 and led by John Mather, senior astrophysicist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. The Cosmic Background Explorer was built at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, and launched in 1989. The instruments on board the explorer made possible groundbreaking studies of the spectrum and spatial structure of the relic radiation from the Big Bang and enabled the scientific team to look back over 13 billion years to the early universe.

An astrophysicist who joined the UC Santa Barbara faculty in 1987, Lubin is an authority on early-universe studies and has participated in many balloon-borne and South Pole-based studies of the remnant radiation from the early universe. He is in Prague for the prize announcement.

The \$250,000 Gruber Cosmology Prize is awarded in partnership with the International Astronomical Union. The 2006 prize was presented today (August 15, 2006) at the International Astronomical Union's 2006 General Assembly in Prague.

Half of the prize goes to Mather and half is to be shared by the other 18 members of the COBE team.

According to the award's sponsors, the prize recognizes extraordinary scientific advances in our perception and understanding of the universe. "The COBE team, led by John Mather, set cosmology's agenda for decades to come and profoundly affected our understanding of cosmic evolution," the award citation states.

In addition to the cosmology prize, the Peter Gruber Foundation, based in the U.S. Virgin Islands, sponsors four other major international awards in justice, genetics, neuroscience, and women's rights. The official announcement of the 2006 Gruber Cosmology Prize, as well as more information about the Gruber Foundation and its programs, can be found on the Web at <http://www.petergruberfoundation.org/>

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